[The Private Plantation]

*249 517 535 534 Then everyone dons his best and the women dance while the men play the drums, tambourines, and cavaquinhos (a ukelelelike instrument) or simply stand around watching, gossiping and "passing the branquinha" (the local white rum).

273 There is a hierarchy of personnel on the plantation, which starts with the owner, Dona Sinhá, and her family. On other plantations the owner is also sometimes a lawyer, doctor, or engineer whose main interests, both economic and social, are in the city of Salvador. This is not always the case, however, for many owners are only rural proprietors, as is Dona Sinhá. But it is always considered a sacrifice to be obliged to spend the winter on one's plantation. It has been a traditional prerogative of the plantation master to spend the winter in the city, and it is one of the traditions kept up today by the planters. However, as soon as the rains show signs of abating in August or September, Dona Sinhá appears on the scene, generally grateful for her release from the city and from the round of anniversaries, parties, and official functions she feels called upon to attend while there.

*249 463 [22] This aspect of partial absenteeism has given rise to the next rung in the hierarchical ladder: the overseer. As such he is a relatively new phenomenon, but he has actually been part of the scene for a long time. At the time of the engenho, the feitor-mor, or head foreman, frequently occupied the place of today's overseer. Seu Paulo is the focal point for most activities on Fazenda das Moças. It is he who puts into action Dona Sinhá's plans, for he has the greatest contact with the workers in the fields and at home, on the arruado (the street on which the houses are located). During the time Dona Sinhá is away he is ruler of the plantation (dono da terra).

*249 463 159 Seu Paulo rose from the workers' ranks; he is familiar with all aspects of sugar-cane cultivation, and is able to handle men and to deal with the owner as well as with the workers. He is a dark mulatto, about forty-six years old, with a large family. He is sought after by the workers as godfather to their children. He rents a small piece of land on which he raises his own sugar cane. He has his own burros, oxen, and carts, which he rents to Dona Sinhá during the harvest season. Although unable to read or write, he can do figures in his head in an astounding fashion. He dresses well, in what is sometimes thought to be an attempt to imitate the plantation master of bygone days, while Dona Sinhá and her family have adopted a more comfortable garb for the country--"modo ameri-

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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teenth. Tapa and Haussá were spoken during the entire nineteenth century, and the latter perhaps long before 1800. Although the Haussás were relatively few in number, their influence was considerable. The slave revolts of the early nineteenth century were, as we have seen, led by this reputedly "most intellectual element" among the imported Africans, many of whom could read and write Arabic characters. Kanúri, spoken in Bahia by the Bornús, and Grúnce, the tongue used by the slaves known as Gallinhas, are included, along with Haussá, Gêge, and Tapa, in the limited vocabularies which Rodrigues collected from Bahian Negroes near the beginning of the twentieth century.[11] Tshi (or Odji), Gá (or Acrá),[12] and Mandê (or Mandinga) were also employed to a limited extent.

As late as 1900, Negro laborers in Bahia continued to wear "white vestments of coarse cotton cloth," which reminded Rodrigues of "the Nagô *camisús*."[13] The *Bahiana* costume,[14] of partial African origin, was extensively used by the Negro women. It was also customary for them to carry their babies bound to the back with a large cloth. African dishes, in the preparation of which *azeite de dendê* (oil of the *dendê* palm) and *pimenta da costa* (pepper from the West Coast) prominently figured, formed a considerable portion of the Negro diet.

At that time, also, African music might be frequently heard, particularly in the ceremonies of the *candomblé*. African musical instruments, like the *atabaque*, the *agê*, the *canzá*, the *marîmba*, the *agôgô*, the *caxixi*, and the *xáque-xáque*[15] were commonly employed. The fetish cult drew allegiance from numerous and zealous devotees.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–21.

[12] Spoken in Bahia by the Ashantis. [13] *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

[14] The *Bahiana* costume is described in detail in chap. ix.

[15] These instruments are described in chap. ix.

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Coast products much prized by Africans and their descendants in Brazil.[1] An elderly Bahian Negro recently brought out from among his treasured possessions a faded photograph of blacks aboard a ship on their way to Africa and pointed out an *atabaque*, or sacred drum, and a woman in *saia grande*.[2] He recalls having been many times with his father at the docks in Bahia when vessels came in from Africa and sailors brought news of Lagos.

Trade with the West Coast, however, gradually decreased until, by 1905, it had almost entirely disappeared. Today, only a few important articles employed in the fetish ritual, such as cowries, *obis* and *orobôs* (sacred fruits), *pimenta* (pepper) *da costa*, *palha* (straw) *da costa*, *sabão* (soap) *da costa*, and strips of *pano* (cloth) *da costa*, are occasionally imported from Africa.

Numerous Africans, their interest in Brazil stirred by Brazilian Negroes returning to the West Coast, are said to have emigrated to Bahia as recently as thirty years ago. Considerable areas in and about the city—for example, Caminho do São Gonçalo, Caminho do Cruz, and a portion of the Terreiro—were once owned, it is said, by *Africanos*.

Today, native-born Africans as a population element are

[1] Pedro Calmon, *Historia social do Brasil* (3 vols.; São Paulo, 1937-39), I, 182. It is also reported that on at least two occasions representatives of African chiefs arrived in Bahia from Ajudá, with which port Bahian officials were maintaining direct commercial relations. One arrived during the administration of the Vice-rei Conde de Athouguia; two others "and an interpreter," on May 26, 1795. See João Varella, *Da Bahia que eu vi* (Bahia, 1935), pp. 153-57; J. B. de Sá e Oliveira, "Dois embaixadores africanos mandados a Bahia pelo Rei do Dahomé," *Revista do Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro*, LVI, Part I (1895), 413.

[2] The large skirt still worn *bouffant* by many Bahian black women. The date was approximately 1895.

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ing, and sudden "cartwheels" alternate with other attempts to confuse and "cripple" an opponent.[22]

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The musical instruments commonly employed among this portion of the population are the *atabaques*, the *agôgô*, the *caxixi*, the *canzá*, the *agê*, the *chocalho*, the *xaque-xaque*, the *cuica*, and the *berimbau*. All but the last three instruments are rarely seen outside the *candomblé*.

The *atabaques* (or *tambaques*) are wooden drums, each approximately twenty inches in diameter but varying in height, invariably used in sets of three. The largest, called *ilû*, or *rum*, is seldom less than two and one-half feet tall and occasionally attains seven feet, while the medium-sized drum, known as *rumpi*, ranges from two to four feet in height, and the smallest, or *lé*, from one and one-half to two and one-half feet. To produce a soft, muted sound, the drums are beaten with the hands. For the heavier tones, *baquetas*, or short wooden sticks, are employed. The huge *bátá-cótó*, or war drum, which played a prominent role in the slave insurrections, has long since disappeared.

The *agôgô* is a bi-tonal instrument, consisting of two hollow iron cones joined together. It is beaten with an iron pin. The *agê*, or *piano de cuiá*, is a large calabash containing pebbles and covered with a small cotton net in whose meshes *buzios*, or cowries imported from Africa, are firmly secured. If the latter are not available, dry seeds known as *contas da Nossa Senhora* are employed instead, and pebbles are occasionally inserted in the calabash itself to augment the sound. The *caxixi* is a tiny reed or straw basket containing cowries or small pebbles. The *xaque-xaque* is a hollow metal instrument shaped like a dumbbell, each of whose enlarged extremities contains small pebbles. When shaken, it produces

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[22] See Edison Carneiro, *Negros bantus* (Rio, 1937), pp. 147–60.

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the sound from which its name is derived. The *chocalho* is a similar instrument, but with only one extremity enlarged. The *adjá* is a small metal bell used to invite members of the cult to the ritual *dar comido ao santo*.[13] The *canzá*, or *ganzá*, now is seldom seen.[14]

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The *berimbau* is used primarily to accompany *capoeira*. It consists of a wire strung upon a stick to form a bow, with a dried gourd open at the top attached at the lower extremity. The instrument is beaten, to produce numerous complex rhythms, with a wooden stick held, together with a *caxixi*, in the right hand, while with the left a copper *vintem* (old Portuguese coin) is alternately pressed against the wire and released. The *cuica* is a drumlike instrument, open at one end. Sound is produced by drawing the hand along a resined stick appended to the center of the drumhead.

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In the lower-class world health and morality are in many cases closely identified. The cause of disease or bodily harm

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is often believed to lie in the direct intervention of a deity who has become angered by the nonfulfilment of obligations prescribed in the sacred ritual or by the breaking of

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taboos. Evil forces may be invoked, it is believed, through the magical influence of the *feitiço* and bring illness, blindness, insanity, or death.[15] The *mau olhado*, or "evil eye,"

[13] See chap. x.

[14] For illustrations of these instruments see Arthur Ramos, *O negro brasileiro* (Rio, 1934), Figs. 24 and 25 (p. 162).

[15] Rituals vary. A portion of the clothing of the one to be harmed, a shoe or other article, may be submitted to magical manipulation and thrown into the sea. In this way the individual is presumed to be subjected to the ebb and flow of the tide. Or a few hairs from the head of the one to be harmed may be mixed with crushed herbs of supposed magical power. Presumably he is then likely "to hate someone whom he now esteems, drink to excess, become crippled or insane, or lose his life." A pigeon, chicken, sheep, or he-

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has passed, dance the dance sacred to her *orixá*, after which she is assisted from the *barracão* into the *pegi*, taking due care to withdraw with her face always toward the drums. In a special room she is then dressed in the ceremonial robes sacred to her *orixá* and, with his sacred insignia, returns to the *barracão* to dance for hours the dances sacred to him.

The sacrifices are performed according to the ritual peculiar to the occasion and include the offering of chickens, pigeons, sheep, and goats.

In the *candomblé* world certain gestures are obligatory. Thus, when saluting a high dignitary of the cult, a *filha*, if the *orixá* to whom she is dedicated is masculine, prostrates herself, face downward at the feet of the one so honored; if her *orixá* is feminine, she lies at full length first on one side, then on the other, and, on rising, touches her head to the ground. In taking leave of an *orixá* who has "visited" the ceremony, a member of the *seita* clasps tightly the left hand of the ceremonial dancer. *Ogans* have a special handshake used only between them. Following a discussion among members of a *seita*, agreement is signified by rising, beating the palms, and shaking hands.

Status in the *candomblé* depends not only on one's position in the hierarchy of functionaries but more particularly upon priority in being "made" or confirmed. Those whose years of service are less are known as "the younger" and must address "the older" with greater respect and, as an *ogan* remarked, "prefer him above one's self."

The musical instruments employed include the *atabaques*, or drums; the *agôgô*, with which the priest or priestess strikes the first notes of each invocation and later accompanies the drums; the *caxixi;* the *agé* (also known as the *cabaça*, or *piano de cuia*); the *adjá;* and, occasionally, the *xaque-xaque*.

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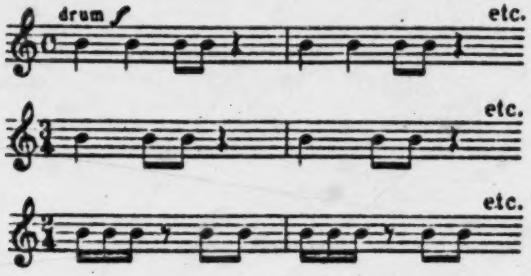
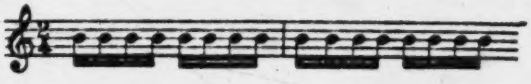
The *atabaques*, or drums, are indispensable to every ceremony. The heavy sound of the larger drum is intersected by the higher tones of the medium-sized and the small one. The rhythm is characterized by one-tone, interrupted syncopation and varies with each *orixá* invoked. Among the more frequent cadences noted by Arthur Ramos[10] are the following:



For the occasions on which an invoked *orixá* "delays" in manifesting himself, even after the tempo of his invocation is greatly increased, there is a special rhythm—vibrant, rapid, continuous, unsyncopated—known as *adarrum*, which the followers of the cult say no *orixá* can possibly "resist." It is the following monotonous rhythm:



Although the instrumental music of the *candomblé* is quite monotonous, as is also the hand-clapping which often accompanies it, the vocal accompaniment is polyphonic. The

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[10] "Os instrumentos musicaes dos candomblés da Bahia," *Bahia Medica*, III (July, 1932), 194.

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songs are ordinarily composed of simple sentences in the minor key, and the scale, which on importation from Africa is said to have consisted of only five intervals, now has seven.

Among the invocations sung to the various *orixds* is that given by a former *ogan* of the *candomblé* of Gantois:

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Egbêji mori ô ri, okorin-kam
Orolu mori ô ri, okorin-kam
(Powerful One, I know thee as the first man)

Ôkum-kum biri-biri
Ajá lê mori ô korin-kam
(Even in the dark I can see thou art powerful)

A orêrê aiê, orixá loman,
Iá, ochê Egbêji orêrê, aiê
(In the whole world, nothing is hidden from the Great-One)[11]

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At the burial of a cult member the songs and musical instruments of the *candomblé* ceremonies are now seldom used as, it is said, they formerly were. But the casket is carried by *ogans*, and the *filhas*, in *bahiana* costume, accompany the procession. Since it is still believed that the *orixá* of the departed may at this time seek a new *cavalo*, no pregnant woman attends. "Possession," however, may and does occur. Thus, at the burial of an elderly Negro woman, a *filha* of Ogun from the *candomblé* of Engenho Velho, who had been "made" for thirty-three years and was widely known and respected for her knowledge of African ritual, two *filhas de santo* were "seized" as the procession wound its way up the steep ascent to Quinta dos Lazaros Cemetery, and another later as the crypt was being sealed. In each case "possession" began with light weeping which soon increased to loud sobbing, the individual meanwhile pressing her hands

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[11] Manoel Querino, *Costumes africanos no Brasil* (Rio, 1938), p. 108.

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front of the Church of Bomfim, booths are erected, each of which has been named for the patron saint of the proprietor or bears an inscription like *Fé em Deus* ("Faith in God"), *Salve a Nova Aurora* ("Hail to the Dawn"), or *A Bahianinha* ("Dear Little *Bahiana*"). At these booths one may purchase such famous Bahian dishes of African origin as *aberém*, *carurú*, *vatapá*, *efó*, and *acarajé*, as well as drinks and other refreshments. *Kermesses*, or small booths given over to games of chance similar to those of traveling "carnivals" in the United States, bear such names as *Lua Cheia* ("Full Moon") or *Abrigo dos Filhos do Povo* ("Shelter for the Children of the People"). A brass band, composed of blacks from the fire department in uniform, plays intermittently from a raised platform in the center of the square.

At night the entire front of the church is ablaze with electric lights. Fireworks almost constantly sputter and bang in the air. An immense crowd mills about the *adro*, while other people sit at tables, eating, drinking, talking, and watching the festivities. About two hours after midnight, the *terno* of *Os Ciganos* ("the Gypsies") appears. It is a band of approximately thirty people, marching two abreast, ten musicians with brass instruments in the lead, followed by a dozen young men each of whom holds aloft a wooden staff branched at the top and lavishly decorated with paper flowers and Japanese lanterns, and an equal number of girls twelve to fourteen years old, dressed in gypsy costumes and shaking castanets and tambourines. After parading around the square, the *terno* halts in front of the church, greets the patron saint, then turns and ascends the platform vacated for this purpose by the band. The girls dance, sing, and play their instruments while one of the men performs a frenzied dance, twirling round and round a standard bearing the name and insignia of the terno.